



Corporate image of a collaborative project

Living Communism

Bourgeois propaganda would have everyone believe that communism is an impossible utopia, and that class relations, as we know them now, which Karl Marx referred to as “*bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*” (“civil society” or more literally, “bourgeois society”) are all-pervasive in human society, to the exclusion of every other kind of social behaviour.

But, on the contrary, the development of class relations and the State (which as Lenin says, is not only the inevitable product of such relations, but also the proof of their irreconcilability) did not expunge all previous forms of human relation.

Humans already had language, and language is a powerful, stateless system. It has no fixed centre. It is communistic.

There are many other examples of communistic human relations which have survived, like language, and which remain as the bulk of our social fabric. There are even some

apparently new kinds of communistic, stateless social structures coming out, such as the Internet, and Bitcoin.

What Andy Blunden has done is to begin to theorise the communistic patterns of social activity, mediated by artefacts that characterise human social existence in general.

This is the on-going body of humanity upon the back of which the class struggle is carried, for the time being, like the cross of Christ, until capitalism's Judgement Day comes.

Andy Blunden's book (from which these excerpts, downloadable via the link below, are taken) is called "A Critique of Activity Theory". It is concerned in part with Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, or "CHAT", but we can pass over the specifics of "CHAT", and look at what Andy means by "collaborative projects" in these chapters.

Collaborative Projects and Artefacts

Collaborative Projects are how people do stuff. Even capitalist companies are collaborative projects.

One characteristic that Andy Blunden identifies is that a collaborative project is always mediated by an artefact, or artefacts. Artefacts are things made by people; but words are also artefacts, by the way.

What Andy therefore begins to theorise is the social place of things, or goods, made by people. This is somewhat different

from the understanding of such goods as being commodities for exchange, which is all that capitalism can manage to do.

Andy's insight includes the way that collective agency is both expressed, and also formed, within collaborative projects. We may say that we are humanists, believing in the rational free will of social beings. But how does this actually proceed? Andy provides a description, rooted in politics, philosophy and educational theory.

In the bourgeois concept of exchange, the commodities are standardised or otherwise limited by contract. In the collaborative project, its intention and purpose remains under negotiation and development. The bourgeois contract excludes human change and on the contrary, presumes that human beings are not subject to change. The collaborative project presumes constant human development and is in fact the location of such development.

Our own method, following Paulo Freire, is to have dialogue involving two or more people, centred on a "codification", which is an artefact (text or image). This conforms to the structure of a "Collaborative Project".

But the aim within this course on Hegel is not necessarily to follow Andy into educational theory. The aim within this particular course is to consider what may already exist under the shell of the class-divided bourgeois State, so that what will remain, if and when that State withers away, can be apparent to us now, today.

What is the living communism of today? This is the question that is being answered by Andy Blunden's writings sampled here.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Collaborative Projects, 2011, Andy Blunden](#).
- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).